

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 27, 2004

The Honorable Don Nickles
Chairman
Committee on the Budget
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kent Conrad
Ranking Member
Committee on the Budget
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Nickles and Ranking Member Conrad:

We are writing in support of sustaining funding for the State Homeland Security Grant program and allocating a baseline level of funding to each State. As you craft the fiscal year 2005 Budget resolution, we urge you to continue providing each state with a minimum level of funding and reject proposals to decrease funding for this important program.

Last year, Congress approved \$1.7 billion for the State Homeland Security Grant, the main source of assistance to State and local governments and first responders responsible for protecting our homeland. Communities use these funds for first responder preparedness activities, such as emergency planning, risk assessments, mutual aid agreements, equipment, training, and exercises. In fiscal year 2004, each State will receive a baseline level of funding, with the remainder allocated to each State based on its population.

The Administration's budget request for fiscal year 2005 would provide the State Homeland Security Grant program with only \$700 million, \$1 billion less than last year. The budget also proposes to eliminate the baseline level of funding to each state.

While many large cities receive supplemental homeland security funding for urban area security, transportation security, inner city bus security, port security, critical infrastructure security, and metropolitan medical response enhancements, most states and communities receive funding only through the State Homeland Security Grant Program.

Reducing the level of funding for the State Homeland Security Grant program would hurt the ability of our first responders to prevent and respond to a terrorist attack. Eliminating this baseline level of funding will make it virtually impossible for states and localities to conduct emergency planning activities since they will not have any idea of how much funding will be available to them next year.

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Every State and local government, regardless of its size, faces increased costs in responding to the heightened level of security. Each and every state must train its first responders.

As you craft the fiscal year 2005 Budget Resolution, we urge you to continue providing each state with a minimum level of funding and reject proposals to decrease funding for the State Homeland Security Grant Program.

With respect and appreciation, we look forward to working with you on this important program.

Sincerely,

Arturo Collins

NQ

Lynda Green

Pat Roberts

Ed Chafe

John Sumner

Tom Capper

Patrick Leahy

Russell D. Feingold

Ben Rayburn

Mark Pryor

Chris Dodd

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